

Southeast News

PUBLISHED BY THE SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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NUMBER 10

UCBHM Mounts Drive For New Churches

Directors of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries at their fall meeting November 5 and 6 in Grand Rapids responded to executive vice-president Howard Spragg's call for a multi-million dollar effort at new church starts, by approving a major drive to establish new churches and improve older ones.

Nine new church starts were authorized during the meeting, one of which will be located in Atlanta and will be part of the Southeast Conference. Two of the nine are Hispanic congregations in El Paso and Miami (the first Hispanic UCC church in Florida). One is to be in a small town, Lucerne, MI. The other five are to be in the suburbs of Omaha, Daytona Beach, El Paso, St. Charles, MO and New York City.

Altogether, the Board will have cooperated with conferences in establishing 30 new churches since October, 1977. The UCBHM has provided \$1,745,750 in capital loans for new church buildings and renovations, plus \$30,000 in outright grants.

Part of the new church development program will be devoted to helping existing UCC churches cope with population changes in their communities, and in some cases helping churches to relocate or to develop relationships with nearby congregations.

Dr. Spragg urged the UCBHM directors to help make church development a "vital concern in the UCC." He also pointed out that "church development is motivated by the imperatives of the gospel and the needs of people. Whether starting new churches or nurturing established churches, the UCBHM has the task of helping congregations become theologically vital, socially related and institutionally strong."

Thus far, the Southeast Conference has doubly benefited from this new emphasis of the UCBHM. In addition to the new church start in Cobb County, Atlanta, GA projected to get underway in 1979, a new

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SPOTLIGHT: 13 MILLION REFUGEES

According to 1978 survey report of the U.S. Committee for Refugees, there are now more than thirteen million refugees, victims of war, intolerance, and social unrest. They are in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Church World Service, the service arm of the National Council of Churches, is asking cooperating denominations, including the United Church of Christ, to "sponsor" and resettle 8,000 to 10,000 of these refugees as rapidly as possible.

More than 2,000 congregations will be needed to help with this enormous effort.

Currently, there are about 100,000 Vietnamese, Laotians, and Cambodians in refugee camps in Southeast Asia, with more arriving daily by foot across heavily guarded borders or by sea as the now highly publicized "boat people." In addition, there is the long awaited but still inadequate Latin America program for resettling 500 persons, and there are other refugees from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in camps in Austria and Italy.

If your congregation is interested in serving as a refugee sponsor, write to Ms. Elfrieda Kohl, Service Division, UCBWM, 475 Riverside Drive, N.Y., N.Y. 10027.

JONESTOWN TRAGEDY LEAVES DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

In the wake of the November 19 Jonestown Tragedy, in which some 900 adherents to Rev. Jimmy Jones plus news persons and a member of the U.S. House of Representatives were either killed or committed suicide in Jonestown, Guyana, we are left with many difficult questions that will not be easily or simply answered.

Nevertheless, until we learn more information from the surviving members of the People's Temple cult, there are at least two observations that can be made.

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UCC-Christian Conversations Continue

Peachtree Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Atlanta, GA was the site of continuing conversations between the Southeast Conference and representatives of the Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee assemblies of the Christian Church. Mandated by the United Church General Synod and the National Assembly of the Christian Church, these conversations, similar to those being held in other regions of the country, are intended as an exploration, on a local level, of the possibility and feasibility of a proposed merger between the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ.)

The November 27 meeting was attended by some 18 representatives of the two denominations, including Rev. Carl Flock, Regional Minister of the Christian Church in Alabama, Dr. Bronson Netterville, Assoc. Regional Minister of the Christian Church in Tennessee, Rev. E. Lyle Harvey, Regional Minister of the Christian Church in Georgia and SEC Minister, W.J. Andes.

In addition to viewing a filmstrip on the heritage of the Christian Church, arrangements were made to enable fellowship and local church discussions among UCC and Christian churches in Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee.

Christmas Greetings

The staff of the Southeast Conference wishes to extend to all its readers our hope for a blessed Christmas Season. Staff members include: Jane Cummings, Administrative Asst.; Barbara Ludwig, Bookkeeper; Virginia McCamey, Secretary; Juanita Velasco, Educational Consultant; Rev. Joyce Myers, OCCL; Steve Hudder, Youth Core; Trudi Sanford, SEC Youth Advisor; Rev. Stephen Gray, Ala-Tenn Administrative Asst.; Rev. Warren Blankenhorn, Assoc. Conference Minister; Dr. W.J. Andes, Conference Minister.

Merry Christmas!

Christmas Humbugs And Hallelujahs

Ol' Scrooge thinks Christmas is a humbug, because, as near as he can figure, the world is a humbug. I suspect he's not alone. Just because our world, too, often seems humbug-ish, doesn't mean Christ is a phony or that our own Christian pilgrimages of faith are futile.

You remember that Scrooge was to wait and watch for the ghosts of Christmases past, present, and future to appear to him. So, during the Advent Season, we wait and watch for the appearance of the Christ who will rescue us from past and present and offer us a new future.

Setting our sights on the mystery called Christmas, we wait and watch.

Watch and wait . . . knowing that our Savior and Redeemer has a humble and humorous sense of timing. When we are penning up sheep for the night, angels appear. When we are putting supper on the table, strangely dressed kings on camels knock and ask directions to Bethlehem. When we are busily at work with holiday business, a child is born in the back shed. When we can only see humbugs, a Star appears overhead.

Advent asks us to watch and wait on the Lord. Take time to do that.

— Rev. Randy Gehres

S-E NEWS:

Your Publication

The Southeast News is your Conference news publication. That means that we hope you will not only read each month's edition, but that you, your church or your pastor will contribute news items or articles of interest for publication. How? Simply send all information to:

Southeast News
700 Bresslyn Road
Nashville, TN 37205

All articles will be edited for space consideration. Pictures are encouraged, black and white if possible and please include name(s) of person(s) pictured.

All materials must be received by the 15th for publication in the next month's issue. The Southeast News is published monthly except for bi-monthly publications of Dec.-Jan. and Aug.-Sept.



DR. RICHARD BRAUN

BRAUNS CONTINUE MISSION WORK IN TENNESSEE

After 21 years as medical missionaries in Ghana under the United Church Board for World Ministries, Dr. Richard and Mrs. Trudy Braun have returned to the United States to live in Crossville, TN where Dr. Braun is now working with the Cumberland Clinic Foundation.

Until their departure from Ghana in 1978, Dr. Braun was medical superintendent of the Adidome Hospital and Mrs. Braun was acting matron. The hospital is a 120-bed rural medical center providing ancillary health services for 100,000 people in the district. In addition to seeing 50 patients and performing two major operations every day, Dr. Braun spent considerable time in administration, supervision and teaching in the hospital and in supervision of district health services.

The Brauns continue to look forward to their work in rural medicine through the Cumberland Clinic in Crossville, the community in which they spent an extended furlough from 1971-73.

With their feet now firmly re-planted, the Brauns would welcome speaking invitations from Conference churches. Available mostly on weekends, they would be willing to travel to churches within convenient range of Crossville.

To contact the Brauns, write in care of: 1012 Old Mail Road, Crossville, TN 38555.

17/76 Funds Aid Birzeit University

The United Church Board for World Ministries continues a century-long concern for people in the Middle East through the Middle East Council of Churches, which represents the major portion of the area's nine million Christians in 22 member-churches of Orthodox and Protestant traditions, and through the International Christian Committee in Jerusalem.

One project of special interest has been our contribution to the Birzeit University, a school for Arab young people which is located on the West Bank of the Jordan River near the city of Ramallah. We have been providing scholarship money for Birzeit University from the 17/76 Achievement Fund. Most of the students at Birzeit University, because of their families' critical financial situations, need scholarships of about \$1,000 per year. Through your giving to the 17/76 Achievement Fund, you have been helping some of them to get the education they need to make a positive contribution to the well-being of their people.

New Churches. . .

[Continued from Page 1]

church start was initiated in Gwinnett County, Atlanta, GA in January of this year. The Gwinnett County effort, under the leadership of Rev. George Bennett, has already attracted an initial core of members and is negotiating the purchase of a site for its church plant.

While location has not been decided, three additional new church starts are scheduled for the Southeast Conference prior to 1988.

Jonestown Tragedy. . .

[Cont. from Page 1]

The first reiterates the validity of the church's mission: to provide a place for people in search of faith. Our primary mission as Christian people revolves not around programs, or social response, or fellowship but in enabling others to find a vital relationship with the living God.

Secondly, we are reminded of the ease in which we can discover ourselves worshipping — in St. Paul's words — the "creature rather than the Creator." Jonestown reminds us how destructive such idolatry has the potential to be.

Whatever else might be said, Jonestown reveals the immensity of the church's task — a task to which each of us is called to labor unceasingly.

S.C. Gray

Hudder New Youth Coordinator

The new Youth Core Coordinator for Southeast Conference youth is Steve Hudder, a second year student at Columbia Theological Seminary. Hudder served as a Summer Assistant to Rev. George Fidler at the St. John's Church, Cullman, AL this past summer.

Steve can be reached through the Conference office or by mail at:

Box 117, 701 Columbia Drive
Decatur, GA 30031

Two training events for the Youth Core are planned in 1979.

POP-IN ENJOYED

Some 30 young people and adult advisors enjoyed a "Pop-In," sponsored by the Alabama-Tennessee Association held at Knoxville Church of the Savior, UCC November 10-12.

The first of three association-wide youth activities planned for this program year, the Pop-In involved youth and advisors from five association churches in such varied activities as mountain climbing in the Smokies, swimming, dancing and discussion groups. Food for the weekend was graciously prepared by members of Church of the Savior. Cost per person was kept to \$10 for the entire weekend.

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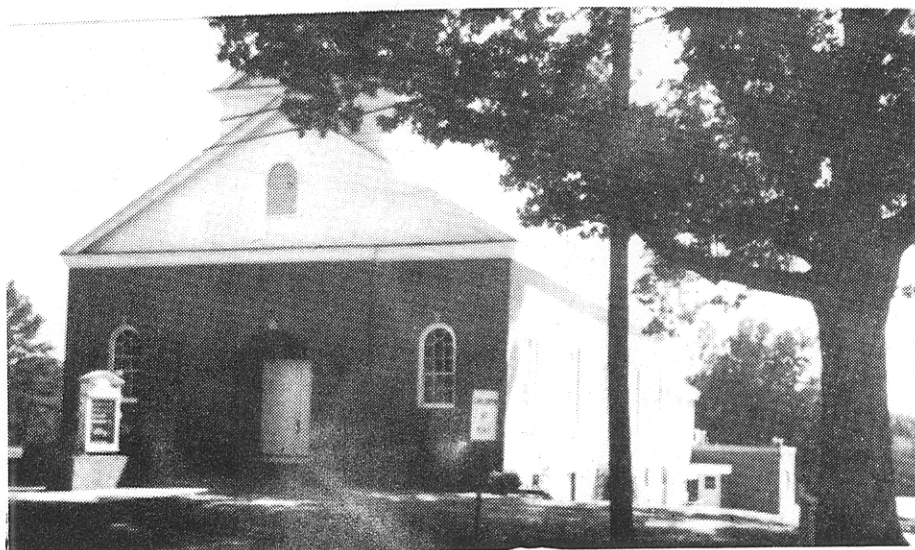
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LANGDALE CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH, UCC

AROUND THE CONFERENCE

Langdale Congregational-Christian Church, UCC

From the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River, from the Gulf of Mexico to the mountains of Kentucky, the Southeast Conference covers a broad expanse of territory. Contained within her boundaries are some 120 churches - widely dispersed - widely diverse in heritage and religious expression - and yet united in the conviction that the churches of Jesus Christ "may all be one."

Representing the conference's sizeable contingent of churches that, prior to the Congregational-Christian merger, were Christian in origin, is Langdale Congregational-Christian Church, UCC. Langdale, AL, is located on the eastern border of the state, north of Opelika.

Organized in 1930, at the beginning of the depression, some four years passed before land at the present site was purchased. In 1935 the first stage of the present church plant was completed.

By 1946 church membership had risen to 244 members, a figure that was subsequently to peak at 410 members under the pastorate of the Rev. Melvin Dollar.

Through volunteer labor Sunday school rooms were constructed in the basement of the church. In the early part of this decade a new parsonage was purchased and a beautiful fellowship hall complex was constructed behind the church's sanctuary.

In its 43 years of service to the community, some 15 interim and regularly called ministers have served Langdale Church, culminating in the church's pre-

sent minister, Rev. John Schofield.

With 175 members at present, the church reports a "wonderful spirit." Operating a full church program, the members of Langdale Congregational-Christian, UCC look forward to growth and continuing ministry to their community.

RESPONSE TO HABITAT GROWING

Good news continues to be received concerning Habitat For Humanity, a home building program fully underway in Zaire and recently initiated in the Morgan-Scott Project, a ministry related to the Southeast Conference.

In Zaire the government recently gave Habitat For Humanity a plot of land in the capital city of Kinshasa large enough to build 100 homes.

In San Antonio, Texas, another of Habitat's target areas, the first new home has been completed at a cost of \$16,700 and is now occupied by Ernesto Torres, his wife, and three children. It is a home about which they could not even dream before. The Torres' will make monthly payments of \$50 which will go back into the fund for further construction.

In Morgan and Scott Counties, TN the first new home is underway, financed in part by a \$1,000 contribution by the East Alabama Association. An additional \$1,000 has also been donated by the churches of the Dadeville, AL area: Elder, Alex City First and East Tallassee churches.

E. Ala. Association Takes Action

Antioch Church in Roanoke, Alabama was the site of the Annual Meeting of the East Alabama Association, held on October 21.

In addition to regular business, the following actions were taken by the Association. It was voted that the Association:

1. contribute \$2,500 for "New Church Development" in the Southeast Conference (\$2,000 in 1977)
2. send \$1,000 to the Morgan-Scott Project at Deer Lodge, TN, (\$1,000 in 1977)
3. contribute \$1,000 to Habitat For Humanity in Zaire, Africa, for home building, (\$1,000 in 1977)
4. aid Uplands Development Program at Pleasant Hill, TN, with a \$500 gift,
5. send \$1,000 to Elon Home For Children, Elon College, N.C.,
6. give Association annuitants (widows of Association Ministers) \$100 each as a Christmas present,
7. (\$2,000 in 1977 mission aid to India).

Association officers elected or re-elected were: Moderator, Rev. John D. Schofield; Vice-Moderator, Rev. Joe A. French; Secretary, Mrs. Florence Dollar; Treasurer, Mr. Donald Harmon; Assistant Treasurer, Mr. Ross McCormack.

Services for Roy Walker

Rev. Roy Walker, a faithful pastor in East Alabama for 35 years, died on October 27, 1978. An ordained minister in the Congregational-Christian Church, Rev. Walker served a number of churches within the East Alabama Association. Rev. Walker was 77 years of age. He is survived by his wife, Iola Hunt Walker, who will be living at their home near Wadley, AL.

Kilts and Bagpipes Mark Worship

Pilgrim UCC, Chattanooga, TN celebrated a most unusual worship service. Entitled "The Kirking of the Tartans," the November 26 worship service celebrated those of Scottish heritage. Sponsored by a group of Scottish descent, including the church's minister Dr. David Beebe, participants were dressed in traditional kilts and the sounds of a bagpipe added new dimensions to the church's musical program!

NEWS & NOTES

Rev. Jim Prickett, the new Associate Director for Habitat For Humanity, recently transferred his ministerial standing to the Georgia-South Carolina Association. Rev. Prickett was originally a minister in the Indiana-Kentucky Conference.

Two new Conference Ministers have recently been appointed: Alfred E. Williams as president and minister of the Massachusetts Conference; and A. Gayle Engel as conference minister of the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference.

Congratulations to Rev. and Mrs. George Fidler at the birth of a grandchild, William Carlton Shaffer II, born November 4. Vital statistics: 7 lbs. 12 ozs., 21 inches long.

The Pleasant Hill "Community Church Courier" has been revived as a weekly newsletter with a staff of 18 part-time volunteers!

Carl N. Sanford, a retired engineer and a leader and long time member of Central Church, Atlanta, died on November 4, 1978. He is survived by his wife, Trudi Sanford, Youth Core Advisor for the Southeast Conference, who will be living at their home in Atlanta.

Clifford Beebe, a Seventh Day Baptist minister and the father of our Conference Moderator, David L. Beebe, died in Florida on September 16 after having just moved there to retire. Dr. Beebe's mother will be living with his sister in Florida.

Knoxville Church of the Savior was host on November 5 to six retired UCC missionaries now living at Uplands Retirement Center, Pleasant Hill, TN. The chief speaker was Miss Anita Harris, former missionary to Brazil.

Rev. Allen Hollis, former pastor of Huntsville UCC, has accepted a call to Church of the Good Shepherd, UCC in New Orleans, Louisiana, a 1976 new church start. Besides Huntsville, Rev. Hollis has served Nashville First E&R, UCC and Langdale, AL, UCC. We wish Rev. Hollis and his family our warmest greetings.

Three churches in the East Alabama Association have recently lost members. Our condolences to the spouses and families of T.R. Allen, Rock Stand Church;

Ruth Carter, Wadley Church; and Bertha Lee Holderfield, Forest Home Church. Their spouses are also members of the respective churches.

At a recent convention in Hawaii, Wallace Boothby was elected President of the National Institute of Real Estate Management. Mr. Boothby is a former Moderator of the Southeast Conference.

Ethel Mae Owen represented the Southeast Conference at a National Conference on the Church and the Handicapped in Lancaster, PA, November 16-18. This was sponsored by the United Church of Christ Board for Homeland Ministries. Ms. Owen is a member of Pilgrim UCC, Birmingham.

The Social Action Committee of Pleasant Hill Community Church organized a visit of Community Church members to the Morgan-Scott Project.

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